

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

SAJ-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /094 W  
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R 201402Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2236

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST VIA POUCH

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11426

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT UR BU

SUBJECT: BREZHNEV CULT IN SOVIET PRESS

1. SUMMARY: RECENT EVENTS INVOLVING WORLD WAR TWO COMMEMORATION HAVE RESULTED IN EXTENSIVE BUT SOMWHAT CONTRIVED PERSONAL PUBLICITY FOR BREZHNEV. END SUMMARY

2. SOVIET PRESS HAS RECENTLY BEEN FILLED WITH PUBLICITY ON AWARDING OF "HERO-CITY" TITLE TO NOVOROSIYSK AND KERCH' SEPTEMBER 14. BESTOWAL OF AWARDS FOR HEROISM DURING WW II IS SOMEWHAT BELATED: OTHER "HERO-CITIES" (MOSCOW, LENINGRAD, KIEV, ODESSA, VOLGOGRAD, SEVASTOPOL', BREST) WERE ALL RECOGNIZED IN 1965. REASON MAY LIE IN REFERENCES, IN PUBLICITY LAUDING TWO CITIES, TO COL. L.I. BREZHNEV, THEN HEAD OF 18TH ARMY'S POLITICAL SECTION, WHO WAS "FREQUENTLY SEEN IN FORWARD TRENCHES."

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3. SEPTEMBER 16 RED STAR PARTICULARLY DRAWS ATTENTION

TO BREZHNEV'S WW II ROLE WITH 1943 PHOTO OF BREZHNEV IN UNIFORM WITH FELLOW OFFICERS. CAPTION EMPHASIZES INSPIRATIONAL ROLE PLAYED BY BREZHNEV DURING HEROIC BATTLES FOR NOVOROSIYSK: "EVERY OFFICER AND SOLDIER KNEW HIM WELL ...HE WAS THE SOLDIERS' FAVORITE...." PHOTO IS ACCOMPANIED BY CURIOUS LETTER TO BREZHNEV FROM FORMER ARTILLERY SERGEANT WHO HAD SEEN HIM DURING THESE BATTLES. SERGEANT REFERS TO UNSIGNED LETTER OF SUPPORT HE SENT BREZHNEV DURING CZECHOSLOVAKIA CRISIS IN 1968, EMOTION EVOKED BY BREZHNEV'S ALMA ATA SPEECH (WHICH HAD "WARMTH AND HUMANITY CHARACTERISTIC OF LENIN") AND TO SUCCESS OF BREZHNEV'S PEACEFUL APPROACH TO IMPERIALIST WEST. HE GOES ON TO COMPLAIN OF INADEQUATE ATTENTION PAID IN SOVIET WAR LITERATURE TO BATTLE FOR NOVOROSIYSK AND "ENORMOUS MOBILIZING ROLE" PLAYED BY POLITICAL WORKERS IN 18TH ARMY.

4. BREZHNEV HIMSELF SOUNDED THEME OF UNSUNG HERO IN SEPTEMBER 18 SPEECH IN SOFIA ACCEPTING BULGARIAN DECORATION: AFTER OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO HIS OWN PARTICIPATION IN BATTLES OF LAST WAR, BREZHNEV EXPLAINED "YOU AND I WERE NOT LOOKING FOR RECOGNITION AND AWARDS. WE ACTED ON COMMAND OF THE HEART, IN RECOGNITION OF OUR DUTY."

5. COMMENT: CITY AWARDS AND BULGARIAN TRIP, WHILE IN LINE WITH INCREASED ATTENTION GIVEN BREZHNEV PERSONALLY IN RECENT MONTHS, GIVE IMPRESSION OF PREFABRICATION AND HASTY ORGANIZATION (SOFIA 1253). SOMEWHAT CONTRIVED ATTEMPTS TO EMPHASIZE BREZHNEV'S CONNECTION WITH SOVIET MILITARY TRIUMPHS AND SACRED LORE OF WW II NOTED OVER THE PAST YEAR SEEM DESIGNED TO IMPROVE HIS IMAGE IN THOSE CIRCLES WHERE TOUGHNESS IS MOST VALUED.  
DUBS

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